

VZCZCXRO8925

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLN
RUEHLZ RUEHNEH RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHSK RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHAH #0678/01 1530942
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 020942Z JUN 09 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2890
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5245
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2981
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2846
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3489
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000678

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, INL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: PHYSICIANS' ARREST FOR SELLING
DRUGS PRECIPITATES MINISTER'S DISMISSAL

ASHGABAT 00000678 001.3 OF 002

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: Twenty employees of a prison hospital in Mary were reportedly arrested two weeks ago for selling drugs to prisoners who were being treated at the hospital. The Minister of Internal Affairs was held responsible for the incident and relieved of his duties on May 29. END SUMMARY.

13. (SBU) Twenty employees of the central infirmary of the main penitentiary in Mary province, including the hospital's director, two deputy directors, chief physician, physicians, practitioners, and prison guards, were arrested on May 21st for selling drugs to the prisoners and patients of the hospital. A local Embassy staff member reported that his cousin, the hospital's deputy director, along with the other arrestees, are being detained in Ashgabat at the Ministry of National Security's detention facility and are being refused visits by either attorneys or family members.

14. (SBU) According to reports, an Iranian prisoner serving a sentence at the Mary prison had been "hospitalized" at the facility for the past 18 months, an arrangement that allowed him to sell drugs to prisoners and hospital patients. High-level prison and hospital officials were reportedly aware of and involved in the arrangement.

15. (SBU) On Friday, May 29, during the State Security Council, President Berdimuhamedov, referring to Minister of Interior Affairs (MIA) Orazgeldi Amanmyradov stated, "Our state allocates huge financial resources for the work of law enforcement officials. However, despite this, we do not see efficiency in your work. Turkmenistan's population is not satisfied with your

performance. There are ongoing shortcomings and breaches of the law in the work of police departments. The growing number of crimes in our country, including grave crimes, the increasing crime rate among police officers and the rise in drug-related crimes, testify to this." The President raised the recent arrests at the prison infirmary and said "The directors of the hospital abused their official positions by becoming involved in this crime, and they have been prosecuted. Such cases undoubtedly undermine the lofty title of police." Berdimuhamedov then noted that the leadership of the Interior Ministry was directly responsible for these shortcomings and said that he was submitting a proposal to the national parliament to relieve LTC Amanmyradov of his post as Interior Minister and to replace him with Isgender Mulikov, currently head of the police department of Dashoguz province.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: The alleged drug crimes occurred in the Mary penitentiary system and are evidence of official tolerance, if not involvement, in Turkmenistan's drug problem. Drugs are reportedly sold not only in the prisons and prison infirmaries, but in drug treatment facilities to addicts as well.

17. (SBU) COMMENT (CONTINUED): The Minister of Interior's dismissal came three weeks after an official reprimand. Pointing out the unsatisfactory work of the former Minister, President Berdimuhamedov said "When there is a crime committed somewhere in our country, the Interior Ministry always fails to do what's needed. They [the Ministry] instead await an order from above. Even if he is aware of everything himself, the Minister behaves as if nothing serious has happened." A police captain

ASHGABAT 00000678 002 OF 002

acquaintance of an Embassy LES noted in this regard that the ex-Interior Minister failed to take action against drug crimes. Police officials are said to be hopeful that the new, 35-year old minister (a USG exchange program alumnus) will be more decisive. END COMMENT.

MILES